

Cumber. He's a very successful businessman, a person who knows the Islamic world. He's agreed to serve in that capacity, and, Sada, I want to thank you very much.

We just had a discussion about his mission. And the core of his mission is to explain to the Islamic world that America is a friend—is a friend of freedom, is a friend of peace, that we value religion, that—matter of fact, we value it to the point where we believe that anybody should be able to worship the way they see fit, and we respect that.

And his is an important job. There's a lot of misperceptions about America, and Sada is going to be a part of our effort to explain the truth. And when people hear the truth about America, when they know that we're a land full of compassionate people and that we value other people's opinions, that they'll slowly but surely begin to better appreciate.

Now, a lot of people love America; don't get me wrong. After all, there's a lot of people trying to come here because of what we stand for. But we've got work to do in certain areas. And I can't thank you enough for going and really will strongly support you in your work.

**Special Envoy Cumber.** Thank you.

**The President.** Thank you very much, sir.

**William F. Buckley, Jr.**

**Q.** Any thoughts on Buckley?

**The President.** I just had the—I just hung up with Christopher Buckley, the son of William F. Buckley. I expressed Laura and my sadness over the passage of this very important figure in American political thought. He was a great author, a great wit, and a leader. And Chris said that his dad died at his desk. And I asked whether it had been a—I know it's a painful experience for Chris's heart, but he said that his dad died a peaceful death. And we got to thank God for that and thank God for his life.

**Q.** Did you talk to him much during this—[inaudible]—sir?

**Q.** You once said Buckley moved conservatism into the Oval Office, that he moved conservatism from the margins of American society into the Oval Office.

**The President.** No question, he was a—one of the great political thinkers. He influenced a lot of people, including me. And he

was—I can remember those debates they had on TV. And he was so articulate, and he captured the imagination of a lot of folks because he was—he had a great way of defining the issues. It was erudite, and yet a lot of folks from different walks of life could understand it. And he's a big figure in our history, and he'll be missed. And we ask for God's blessings on his soul. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:01 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

## Remarks Honoring the 2007 World Series Champion Boston Red Sox

February 27, 2008

**The President.** Welcome. Thank you for coming. Please be seated. So Tim Wakefield's batterymate is Doug Mirabelli; mine is the Vice President. [Laughter] We're glad you all are here. The mighty Red Sox Nation has stormed the South Lawn.

It's my honor to welcome the owners of the Red Sox. The principal owner is John Henry. Tom Werner is the chairman—and my longtime buddy Larry Lucchino. We appreciate the other owners who are here as well. I'm proud to be here with Terry Francona; the captain of the mighty Red Sox, Jason Varitek; the MVP of the World Series, Mike Lowell. They're mentioned because I'm trying to entice a gift out of them. [Laughter]

We appreciate very much members of the administration who are here. Don't linger. [Laughter] Welcome the Members of the United States Congress—Massachusetts and Connecticut and probably Rhode Island and—[applause]—yes. [Laughter] Thanks for coming.

I'm real proud for the Red Sox baseball club, its players, the players' families, all those associated with this unbelievably successful franchise. You know, you've—Red Sox Nation extends beyond the South Lawn, extends beyond New England. It obviously goes to the Caribbean and even the Far East. And so we welcome Japan's Daisuke here to the South Lawn. His press corps is bigger than mine. [Laughter] And we both have

trouble answering questions in English. [Laughter]

Two thousand seven was an unforgettable season—fast start, hung on in the end, swept the Angels, had a little trouble with the Indians, but battled back from what a lot of folks were saying sure defeat, and you took on Colorado and swept them. Like, you're 8–0 in the World Series. And I appreciate the fact that, as I mentioned, Mike Lowell put on an outstanding performance. But it was a team effort that brought the Red Sox here.

I love the fact that you've got some of the game's biggest stars. I mean, Big Papi, the guy lights up the screen. He brings a great personality to it. I'm sorry his running mate, Manny Ramirez, isn't here. I guess his grandmother died again. [Laughter] Just kidding. [Laughter] Tell Manny I didn't mean it. But I do want to quote him. He said, "When you don't feel good and you still get hits, that's when you know you're a bad man." [Laughter] I don't know what that means. [Laughter] But if bad man means good hitter, he's a really bad man, because he was clutch in the World Series and clutch in the playoffs, as was my fellow Texan, Josh Beckett. Man, you're looking sharp.

**Josh Beckett.** A lot better than last time?

**The President.** Spring, Texas?

**Mr. Beckett.** Yes.

**The President.** Spring, Texas. He's a big-game pitcher. He struck out—nine strikeouts a game in the playoffs. I appreciate very much that he works hard and throws hard and is a proven winner. And I guess he took some lessons from Curt Schilling, one of the great big-time pitchers.

You can't win the World Series without a good bullpen. I've got to make mention of a guy who is from my hometown of Midland, Texas—that would be Mike Timlin. Mike, good to see you again. You did not buy those glasses in Midland, Texas. [Laughter]

**Mike Timlin.** No. [Laughter]

**The President.** Yes. And how about Jonathan Papelbon? The guy pitches almost as well as he dances. [Laughter] And I appreciate the dress code. Thanks for wearing pants. [Laughter] Good job, and congratulations.

I do want to congratulate the ownership and the front office. This is a club that was wise enough to maintain a core of players that knew how to win. Varitek, Mirabelli, Ortiz, Ramirez, Schilling, Youkilis, Timlin, and Wakefield were all members of the 2004 championship team, and they provided the nucleus to bring some new players and some young players along. I bet you Dustin Pedroia, the American League Rookie of the Year, would tell you it makes a big difference. It makes a big difference to be hanging out with people who know how to win.

And so the ownership gets a lot of credit, the front office gets credit, and so does a really fine manager in Terry Francona. Laura and I had the honor of having Mike Lowell and Mrs. Francona and Terry for dinner earlier this month—earlier this year. And what I was impressed about was the values of this guy and the fact that he honors his family as the first and foremost thing in his life. And I think the ownership made a good deal in signing him to a new contract.

I appreciate the fact the team has overcome adversity. All of America, whether you're a Red Sox fan or not, was moved by the Jon Lester story. Jon had a decisive victory over cancer and in the World Series. And it was an inspiration to a lot of folks who were looking at this good man to determine whether they, themselves, could overcome adversity. And so, Jon, we want to thank you and congratulate you.

I don't know if you know this or not, but these good folks are headed to Walter Reed after this celebration, and I—[applause]. These champs have got a chance to bring some joy in somebody's heart, and I want to thank you for really honoring the true heroes of the United States of America, and those are those who wear the uniform of our country. And I'm really thankful you're going.

I appreciate the work of the Red Sox Foundation and the Jimmy Fund. These are long-lasting charities that this club is committed to, to help improve people's lives. You can be a champion on the field, and you can be a champion off the field. And a lot of these players are champions off the field.

And I thank you for your commitment. I thank you for your dedication to a great sport.

I congratulate and thank your families for hanging in with you in this long, 162-game season. I wish you all the best in the upcoming year, and it's my great honor to welcome you back to the White House as the World Series champs.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:08 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Tim Wakefield, Daisuke Matsuzaka, Josh Beckett, Curt Schilling, Mike Timlin, Jonathan Papelbon, and Jon Lester, pitchers, Doug Mirabelli and Jason Varitek, catchers, Larry Lucchino, president and chief executive officer, Terry Francona, manager, Mike Lowell, Kevin Youkilis, and Dustin Pedroia, infielders, David A. "Big Papi" Ortiz, designated hitter, and Manny Ramirez, outfielder, Boston Red Sox; and Jacque Francona, wife of Terry Francona.

### **Statement on the Death of William F. Buckley, Jr.**

*February 27, 2008*

America has lost one of its finest writers and thinkers. Bill Buckley was one of the great founders of the modern conservative movement. He brought conservative thought into the political mainstream and helped lay the intellectual foundation for America's victory in the cold war and for the conservative movement that continues to this day. He will be remembered for his principled thought and beautiful writing, as well as his personal warmth, wit, and generous spirit. His legacy lives on in the ideas he championed and in the magazine he founded, *National Review*.

Laura and I send our prayers to Chris Buckley, the Buckley family, and all who loved this good man.

### **The President's News Conference**

*February 28, 2008*

**The President.** Good morning. Laura and I, as you know, recently came back from Africa, where we saw firsthand how the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief is saving lives. I had a chance to go to the—speak to the Sullivan Foundation the other day about our trip, and the reason I did so was to remind the American people about how important it is for our Nation to remain generous and

compassionate when it comes to helping people overseas.

I also, during my trip, urged Congress to reauthorize the emergency plan and increase our commitment, and they did. They approved a good, bipartisan bill that maintains the principles that have made this program effective. And so I want to thank Acting Chairman Howard Berman and Ranking Member Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and all the members of the committee for the action they took. This afternoon they're going to come down, and I'll be able to thank them in person. And I'm going to brief them on the trip. The—obviously, our hope is now that the House will act quickly and send the bill reauthorizing PEPFAR to the Senate. And I'd like to sign it into law as quickly as possible.

Members should also act on a very urgent priority, and that is to pass legislation our intelligence officials need to quickly and effectively monitor terrorist communications. At issue is a dispute over whether telecommunications companies should be subjected to class-action lawsuits because they are believed to have helped defend America after the attacks of 9/11. Allowing these lawsuits to proceed would be unfair. If any of these companies helped us, they did so after being told by our Government that their assistance was legal and vital to our national security.

Allowing the lawsuits to proceed could aid our enemies because the litigation process could lead to the disclosure of information about how we conduct surveillance, and it would give Al Qaida and others a roadmap as to how to avoid the surveillance. Allowing these lawsuits to proceed could make it harder to track the terrorists because private companies besieged by and fearful of lawsuits would be less willing to help us quickly get the information we need. Without the cooperation of the private sector, we cannot protect our country from terrorist attack.

Protecting these companies from lawsuits is not a partisan issue. Republicans and Democrats in the United States Senate came together and passed a good bill protecting private companies from these abusive lawsuits. And Republicans and Democrats in the House stand ready to pass the Senate bill